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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/026,964	12/21/2001	Mark A. Baloga	076507-0421	7993

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FOLEY & LARDNER
777 EAST WISCONSIN AVENUE
SUITE 3800
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202-5308

EXAMINER

MCDERMOTT, KEVIN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3635

DATE MAILED: 06/03/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/026,964

Applicant(s)

BALOGA ET AL.

Examiner

McDermott, Kevin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresp nd nc address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 57-82 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 57-67, 69-72, and 74-82 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 68 and 73 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 9.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 57-60, 67, 77, and 78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317).

Regarding claim 57, Hellwig discloses in figures 1-3 and in column 1, line 1 to column 5, line 54, a frame based office panel in combination with bridge arrangements for defining a work station. Column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 16 discloses a series of office panels 4 connected in an end to end manner forming a spline 5 to which bridge arrangements 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner. The bridge arrangements 6 extend at an angle from the spline 5 and define a series of work stations. The bridge arrangements 6 can be connected to an office panel 4 at any point along the length of the office panel. Column 3, lines 39-41 disclose the bridge

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arrangement 6 including an extension or floor engaging column member 50 at the free end of the rectangular partition 30. Column 4, line 53 to column 5, line 12, discloses a wiring trough 100 secured to the lower edge of the bridge member 6 for receiving the communication or electrical wiring generally indicated as 104 in Fig. 5. This facilitates a normal electrical connection with a receptacle of the office panel 6 either interior to the office panel, or along an appropriate surface thereof. The wiring for the equipment supported on work surface 9 is placed in the casual wiring trough 100 attached to a bridge 6. The spline 5 of office panels 4 is interpreted as the claimed furniture, the bridge arrangement 6 is interpreted as the claimed utility beam movably attached to the office panels 4, the floor engaging column member 50 is interpreted as the claimed utility access extension, and the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are interpreted as utility delivery zones. Because the trough 100 extends for the length of the bridge 6 from the panels 4 to the member 50 it is configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone.

Regarding claim 58, because Hellwig discloses the claimed structure Examiner considers Hellwig inherently capable of performing the same functions and being used in the same manner as the claimed invention.

Regarding claim 59, the bridge arrangement 6 of Hellwig is associated with work stations located on either side of the bridge 6.

Regarding claim 60, because Hellwig discloses the claimed structure Examiner considers Hellwig inherently capable of performing the same functions and being used in the same manner as the claimed invention.

Regarding claim 69, the member 50 is located at a lateral distance outboard of the spline 5.

Regarding claims 77 and 78, the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are the utility delivery zones. These cavities are both on and in the member 50.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 61-68 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) in view of Verbeek and further in view of Borgerson.

Regarding claims 61-66, Hellwig's disclosure is discussed above. However, Hellwig does not disclose the bridge 6 being configured for sliding movement along the spline 5 and the member 50 configured for rolling movement.

Verbeek discloses in figures 1-6 and in column 2, lines 46-57, a privacy screen 10 slidably connected to a panel 4. Verbeek also discloses a cover 72 having outer slide 60 fixed thereto. The cover 72 and outer slide 60 are considered to be a horizontal rail mounted on the panel 5 and the other slides (i.e. the inner slide 56, and the intermediate slide 58) engage the outer slide 60. The inter-related slides 56, 58, 60 are interpreted as constituting a track.

Borgerson discloses in figures 1 and 2, a cabinet 10 supported on a track horizontally mounted on a wall 12 and the cabinet 10 having casters 29, 30. The casters 29, 30 are vertically adjustable as disclosed in column 3, lines 40-42.

Therefore, Examiner considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the bridge arrangement 6 of Hellwig so that it is configured for sliding movement along the spline 5 and to modify the member 50 to have vertically adjustable casters.

One of ordinary skill would modify the bridge arrangement 6 to slide along the spline 5 to provide a simple method to move the bridge arrangement along the spline 5.

One of ordinary skill would modify the member 50 to have vertically adjustable casters to easily roll the member 50 on a floor. The casters would then be vertically shortened and the height adjustable glides 56 could be vertically adjusted to support the member 50.

Claim 67 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317).

Hellwig's disclosure is discussed above. Additionally, Hellwig discloses the bridge arrangement 6 and the member 50 forming a T-shape.

However, Hellwig does not specifically disclose the bridge 6 and the member 50 connected to form an L-shape.

It is well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art to connect panels with each other to form various configurations.

Therefore, Examiner considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the bridge 6 and member 50 in the form of an L-shape, as a matter of design choice.

One of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify Hellwig to make a bridge arrangement better suited to constructing exterior corners of office workstations.

Claims 70-74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) in view of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796).

The disclosure of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) is discussed above. However, Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) does not disclose mounting a light fixture on the bridge 6.

Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796) discloses in figure 1 and in column 4, lines 4-7, mounting a light on a panel, and the light having a shade. The light is interpreted as a light fixture and the shade as a small canopy.

Therefore, Examiner considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to mount a light having a shade on the bridge 6 of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317).

Regarding claim 72, the trough 100 of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) is the claimed utility infeed.

Regarding claim 75, Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) discloses the bridge 6 being positioned at a higher elevation than the bottom of the furniture/spline 5.

Claim 76 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) in view of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796) and further in view of Verbeek.

The disclosures of both Hellwig patents and Verbeek are discussed above. Therefore, Examiner considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) to include a predefined path defined by a rail to selectively deliver utilities to at least one portion of a work area.

Claims 79 and 80 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) in view of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796).

As discussed above, Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) discloses cavities formed by the members 60, 62 that are the utility delivery zones. These cavities are both on and in the member 50.

Claims 81 and 82 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) in view of Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796).

As discussed above, Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) discloses cavities formed by the members 60, 62 that are the utility delivery zones. These cavities are both on and in the member 50.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 3/11/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding independent claim 57 and claims 58-69 depending therefrom, Applicant argues that Hellwig does not teach an overhead utility beam. Examiner disagrees.

"Overhead" indicates orientation of the beam, not a structural limitation. Hellwig discloses all the structural limitations of claim 57. Additionally, in the situation where an individual is sitting in a workspace defined by the bridge arrangement 6 of Hellwig, the partition 30 is over their head. Consequently, the rejections of claims 57-69 stand.

Regarding claims 70-72 and 74-76, Applicant again argues that Hellwig does not disclose an overhead beam. As discussed above, this is not a structural limitation. Applicant also asserts that the combination of Hellwig '371 in view of Hellwig '796 is improper because it does not disclose, teach, or suggest the claimed subject matter. However, Applicant does not explain why the combination does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed subject matter

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, one of ordinary skill would mount, or couple, a light having a shade on the bridge arrangement 6 of

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Hellwig so that a person working within the area defined by the arrangement 6 could see.

Regarding claim 76, one of ordinary skill would be motivated to modify Hellwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317) to be adapted for movement along a predefined path to easily provide wiring in trough 100 to equipment supported by surface 9.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 68 and 73 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding claim 68, the prior art does not disclose, and it does not appear obvious to modify the prior art to disclose, a utility distribution system having the structural limitations of claim 57 and also having a retractable partition.

Regarding claim 73, the prior art does not disclose, and it does not appear obvious to modify the prior art to disclose, a utility distribution system having the structural limitations of claims 70 and 72, wherein the utility infeed is a flexible conduit within a recess in the top of the furniture.

Conclusion

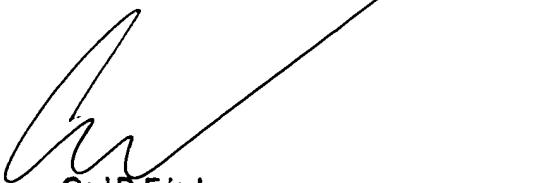
Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to Kevin McDermott, whose telephone number is 703-308-8266.

KM 5/30/03



Carl D. Friedman
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600